

IOWA ALTERNATE ASSESSMENT (IAA)
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS
2008-2009

- 1. Is parental permission required for students with disabilities to participate in the Iowa Alternate Assessment process?** Not directly. Parents are members of the IEP team and will be involved in IEP team decisions on how an individual student will participate in accountability assessment programs.
- 2. Do the IAA rating scales need to be given to the parents?** No. However, the teacher should review the completed rating scales with parents.
- 3. Should the rating scales be placed in the student's cumulative folder?** No. Only the rating scale results should be placed in the cumulative folder.
- 4. What content areas and grades does the IAA assess?** Reading is assessed at grades 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, and 11. Math is assessed at grades 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, and 11. Science is assessed at grades 5, 8, and 11.
- 5. Do grades kindergarten, 1, 2, 9, 10, and 12 need to be assessed in the IAA process?** No, unless the local school district gives a district wide assessment to students in those grades. In that case, the IAA must be given. Results of the assessment do not need to be shared with the State but utilized by the local school district.
- 6. Can the IEP be used as the alternate assessment?** NCLB in Non-Regulatory Guidance to states is quite clear. The IEP cannot be used as an alternate assessment.
- 7. Are functional and access skills on student's IEPs measured in the IAA?** The focus of the alternate assessment is on academics as represented by the Iowa Core Content Standards and Benchmarks.
- 8. Can a student participate in the IAA in one content area and participate in the ITBS in another content area?** Yes. Students who can meaningfully participate in any portion of the general assessment should do so.
- 9. How is the above decision represented in the student's IEP?** Page G allows for a complete description of how the student is being assessed. This will assist parents to understand how their child will participate in district-wide assessments.
- 10. What does a district do if they are over the 1% limit?** The Department will contact the district and send them a 1% exemption request form.

11. For accountability purposes, how are home-schooled students, foster care students, out of state placements, and residential placements treated in the IAA?

Home School – These students fall under their own rules and regulations associated with competent private instruction. They are not counted as full time equivalency (FTE) by the local school district and would not be a part of the district's local accountability system.

Foster Placement – These students have been placed by the court system and if they do not attend a public school, their scores would roll up to the state level. **Out of State**

Placements – This would be on a case-by-case basis. The most likely scenario would be that they were placed by the court system out of state. More than likely these students would not be counted in the local district's accountability system. If the district was a part of the decision to send a student out of state then that sending district must make sure the student is tested (other state's test not the IAA) and the scores sent back to the district.

In-State Private Residential Placements – if a local district was involved in this decision and a 28E agreement was executed, then the score(s) for that student in the residential facility should come back to the sending district. If a parent made a unilateral decision or open enrolled to this facility then the district educating that student would keep the score in that district.

12. Are students in accredited nonpublic schools included in AYP? Nonpublic school students, even if they are shared time, are not included in AYP decisions.

13. How many days can a student miss school to not be considered for a full-academic year? If the student was enrolled on the first day of the testing period the previous year and is still enrolled on the first day of testing for the current school year, full academic year applies. Only if the student was dropped from the enrollment rolls of the school or district is the student considered not continuously enrolled for the full academic year.

14. What is the testing period for the IAA? From the start of school to March 31st.

15. If a new student moves or transfers into my class, do I need to conduct the IAA? Do what you can. The student would count as participating in your district's assessment system. The student would not count toward full academic year and his/her score would not count toward proficiency. If the student transferred from another Iowa school district, try to obtain what this district did for the IAA process.

16. What does grade mean? It means the grade the student is currently in.

17. We do not use grades but group students according to their ages? You must identify a grade for each student based on the ages of non-disabled students in particular grades.

18. Can parents refuse to have their child included in the alternate assessment? All students must be assessed under NCLB regulations, if not in the general statewide assessment, the alternate assessment. So the answer is no. However, if the local school

district has a policy to allow parent requests to not test students, this policy should extend to parents of children with disabilities. Parents of enrolled students need to know that if their child does not take the alternate assessment, they are counted as exclusions under NCLB, which could eventually cause problems for districts in making AYP.

19. Do my districts standards and benchmarks need to align to the rating scale items? No. The Department has already aligned the rating scale items with the state's Core Content Standards and Benchmarks (CCSBs) and districts have assured the Department of Education that their standards include the CCSBs.

20. Can a student be excluded from participating in the alternate assessment? Pursuant to federal guidance, in the event that a student is unable to participate in the assessment due to a significant medical emergency, that student may be able to be excluded from the participation and proficiency rates. This will be handled on a case-by-case basis through the AYP appeals process. Please contact Paul Cahill at paul.cahill@iowa.gov or Tom Deeter at tom.deeter@iowa.gov for further information.

21. How do we count students for AYP decisions if they are open-enrolled (parent decision)? The receiving district tests the student and keeps the score.

22. How do we count students for AYP decisions if they are tuitioned in or out of our district? For tuition in students, the scores go to the sending district and count only at the district level. Tuition out students, the district gets scores back and counts the student only at the district level.

23. How do we count students who have been court adjudicated for AYP decisions? If the student attends a school that is under the jurisdiction of a local school board, that student counts in that district, but at the district level only.

24. Should we assess a student who comes to school only 2-3 hours per day? Yes. Each student should have access to the general education curriculum on a regular basis.

25. Should an alternate assessment be given to a student who spends all day in a hospital? Yes. If appropriate, this student should be receiving hospital/homebound instruction. In this case, it would be appropriate for this student to take the alternate assessment.

26. What does 1% of the alternate assessment mean? NCLB does not limit the percent of students able to take the alternate assessment. The IEP team decides a student's participation. Any student taking the alternate assessment is counted in the participation rate. However, you can only use a maximum of 1% of the IAA proficient scores at the district level toward meeting district adequate yearly progress (AYP). The 1% refers to the percent of students (in all tested grades combined) taking the alternate assessment that may be able to be counted as proficient for AYP purposes. There is no limit at the building level.